727 included the creation of a Duchy of Courland and a Duchy of Estonia
648 and Livonia in personal union with the Crown of Prussia, and the organization of extensive German colonization in those Provinces. To this end, in each Province the old *Landtag* and *Landesrat*, consisting of representatives of the Baltic Barons, were hastily revived. On March 8, 1918, the *Landesrat* of Courland invited the Kaiser to accept the Grand-ducal crown of Courland; the invitation was graciously accepted. An unsuccessful attempt was made to persuade the district Elders of Estonia and Livonia, summoned to a conference at Riga on April 10 for the purpose, to consent to union with the Prussian Crown; the fear of German colonization was too strong. M. Konstantin Paets, the chief organizer of resistance to such a scheme, was imprisoned in a Polish concentration camp. In default of popular consent, Baron Dellingshausen, the leader of the Baltic Barons in Estonia, sent a request for union to the Kaiser, who con-
[423] veyed his 'consent' to it on April 21. In July 1918 agrarian regulations were issued providing for a Colonization Union in Courland, at whose disposal the Baltic Barons placed a third of their landed property for the purpose of fresh German colonization: all private land agreements for the last thirty years were to be annulled, without any provision being made for expropriated peasants.

● 728 *Lithuania.* In Lithuania, hoping to make capital out of the Russian
649 Provisional Government's unsympathetic attitude towards the
186 Lithuanian nationalists, and with a view to creating a body which
[661] would lend itself to the furtherance of annexation schemes, the German authorities rashly permitted a nationalist movement to take shape in the autumn of 1917. Immediately after the Russian evacuation of Vilna, a conference of over 200 leaders, selected by an organizing committee, met there and passed a resolution that Lithuania should become an independent democratic State within her ethnographic frontiers, and that a Constituent Assembly should be convened. The conference appointed, for the conduct of affairs in the interim period, a National Council or *Taryba*, consisting of twenty-six members, including six representatives of minorities, with M. Antanas Smetona as its president. Under German pressure, the *Taryba* adopted further resolutions on December 11, which, while claiming the reconstitution of an independent State with Vilna as its capital, omitted all mention of a Constituent Assembly, and even asked for German aid during the period of reconstruction in the form of a 'perpetual and solid alliance' with the German Empire. In a rescript of March 23, 1918, the Kaiser granted *de jure* recognition of Lithuanian independence on the basis of the December resolutions; but by this time the *Taryba*, realizing the character of the peace negotiations with Russia at Brest-Litovsk, to which they had been refused per-

mission to send a delegate, had made a new official declaration of 728 ●
Lithuanian independence on February 16, 1918, this time on the 186
basis of the original Vilna resolutions of September 1917, with a 648
renewed demand for a Constituent Assembly.

The German General Staff now conceived the idea of a personal union of Lithuania with Saxony, under a monarchical government. In order to thwart this plan, and under pressure from the clerical party in Germany, the *Taryba*, on June 14, 1918, invited the Catholic Duke William of Urach—alleged to be a Württemberg descendant of the old Lithuanian king Mindaugas—to ascend the throne of an independent Lithuania as Mindaugas II. The invitation was accepted, in spite of the strong opposition of a section of the *Taryba* itself, not to mention that of the German General Staff. But, with military defeat growing daily more certain, the latter's authority was beginning to wane, and on October 20 the new Chancellor, Prince Max of Baden, informed the *Taryba* that it had been decided to delegate full legislative and administrative power to a Lithuanian Government, as soon as it should be constituted, and to remove the German occupying forces as soon as possible. The *Taryba*, therefore, 642
on November 2, withdrew the invitation to the Duke of Urach, leaving the form of government to be decided by the future Constituent Assembly. Meanwhile, constituting itself as the legislative body, it elected a triumvirate, consisting of MM. Smetona, Staugaitis, and Šilingas, who on November 5 invited M. Voldemaras to form a non-party Cabinet and to negotiate with the various nationalities.

3. The German Evacuation and the Bolshevik Invasion

As soon as the Armistice of November 11, 1918, was signed, the leaders in each country set about the task of organizing their respective administrations, consolidating the political independence of the new Governments, and finally drafting constitutions.

The Estonian National Council met on November 20, 1918, after nine months' rustication; M. Paets was released from imprisonment, and the Government set up under him on February 24 was confirmed in its authority.

In Latvia, M. Karl Ulmanis's democratic *bloc* was now joined by 642
the members of the Latvian Refugees' Committee and of the Latvian 646
National Council from Petrograd, and an all-Latvian Council of State was formed of some 100 members of all parties, except the Social-Revolutionaries and Bolsheviks.[1] The Assembly met at Riga on November 18, 1918, elected M. Čakste as its president, and formed

[1] About two-thirds of the seats, which were allotted according to the votes received by these parties in the elections under the Provisional Government, were held by peasants and workers, while the remaining third of the members were merchants, manufacturers, and representatives of the national minorities.

642 a Provisional Government with M. Ulmanis as Prime Minister and
646 M. Meierovics as Foreign Minister, pending the convocation of a Constituent Assembly.

642 In Lithuania, M. Sleževičius became Prime Minister in the Cabinet formed in November 1918 by M. Voldemaras, when the latter left to attend the Peace Conference in Paris. A provisional National Assembly, the 200 members of which were chosen by mass meetings all over the country, met in Kaunas (Kovno)[1] from January 17 to 23, 1919, to draft a republican constitution and to re-elect and expand the *Taryba*; M. Smetona was elected President of the State on April 4.

● 728 Before the constitutions could be drafted, however, the new
648 Provisional Governments had to concentrate their whole energies on the military situation brought about by the Armistice of November 1918. The Armistice Convention had provided that the German troops were to evacuate all territories which were formerly a part of the Russian Empire 'as soon as the Allies shall consider this desirable, having regard to the interior conditions of those territories' (Article 12), and were to 'cease at once all requisitions, seizures, or coercive measures for obtaining supplies intended for Germany in . . . Russia' (Article 14). It was the intention of the Allies that the German forces should do their utmost to stem the Bolshevik advance, and that, when their services were no longer needed, they should withdraw from the Baltic Provinces without reaping any political reward for their efforts. This was clearly too much to expect, and the Germans, by withdrawing rapidly and without permission in November 1918, and by removing all supplies of arms, food, and even rolling-stock as they went, in violation of Article 14, not only facilitated the Bolshevik invasion, but did their best to put the new Baltic Governments in the position of having to turn to them for assistance.

648 At the end of November the Red Armies had begun to penetrate
721 into Estonia from Narva and the Finnish coast; on January 5, 1919, they were in Vilna, and the Lithuanian Government had retired to Kaunas, while the Latvian Government had been driven from Riga to take refuge at Liepāja (Libau). By the end of February the Bolsheviks had overrun Latvia and a large part of Lithuania.

[723] In Estonia, General Laidoner and Captain Pitka organized an army and marine force from the remnants of the Estonian regiments of 1917, and—with the aid of Finnish loans and volunteers, gifts of ammunition and foodstuffs from Great Britain, and the occasional presence of British warships in Tallinn (Reval) and Liepāja under Admiral Sinclair—put up a heroic resistance, and by the beginning of February 1919 had temporarily cleared the country.

[1] Vilna was then occupied by the Bolsheviks.

remonstrance of August 1 was also ignored, the Supreme Council finally threatened to use economic pressure to enforce evacuation. At the suggestion of the German Government, a Mixed Commission was then formed which proceeded to Berlin, and thence to Tilsit in November, to deal with the question.

Meanwhile, General von der Goltz had been replaced by the adventurer Avalov-Bermondt, who in October besieged Riga. This attack was successfully resisted, and as a result of the efforts of the Mixed Commission, the German evacuation now began in earnest; by the middle of December it was complete throughout the Baltic States.

Peace Treaties and Recognition by Foreign Powers. It yet remained to expel the last remnants of the Bolshevik armies; but in January 1920 the Latvian troops, aided by Poland, succeeded in clearing Latgale, and by that time Estonia was already negotiating peace with Soviet Russia. She had refused a separate armistice offered by the latter at Pskov in September 1919, fearing an attempt to weaken, by disuniting, the Succession States; but, on December 31 of that year, in the face of a Soviet refusal to conduct joint negotiations with all three Governments at once, MM. Poska and Piip consented to a separate armistice, and on February 2, 1920, the Treaty of Tartu (Dorpat) was signed, whereby the R.S.F.S.R. accorded *de jure* recognition to Estonia's independence. Lithuania followed suit with the Treaty of Moscow on July 12, 1920, and Latvia on August 11, 1920, with the Treaty of Riga.[1]

It remained for Estonia to fix with Latvia their mutual frontier, and to settle the disputed question of the town of Valga (Walk), which was finally partitioned between the two countries by a Convention of March 22, 1920, through the mediation of Colonel Tallents. Latvia made peace with Germany by a Protocol of July 15, 1920; the delimitation of the Latvian-Lithuanian frontier by a court of arbitration, under the presidency of Sir James Simpson, was not completed until March 1921.

Lithuania was less fortunate, since, even after the Russian evacuation, her eastern and western frontiers were still in dispute. Vilna, which she regarded as her capital, was also claimed by Poland; and when the Bolsheviks had evacuated the city it was the Poles and not the Lithuanians who entered it on April 20, 1919. The fortunes of the city and district of Vilna during the Soviet-Polish war, which continued until the autumn of 1920, are related elsewhere.[2] Poland's final settlement of the question in her own favour by the Zeligowski *coup* of October 6, 1920, was ultimately recognized by the Conference

[1] For the terms of these settlements, see below, pp. 65–6.
[2] For the history of the Vilna controversy, see below, pp. 89–93.

of Ambassadors on March 15, 1923. On the western frontier, Lithuania was more successful; the Allies had compelled Germany to cede the Memel area to them with a view to its later cession to Lithuania, but, while they were still negotiating on the subject, the Lithuanian Government took matters into its own hands, and on January 10, 1923, sent troops to occupy the area by force. This *fait accompli* was recognized by the Allies in the Memel Convention of 1924.[1]

One of the last acts of the Estonian Committee of Elders before the exchange of Bolshevik for German terrorization in 1918, had been the issue of a declaration that 'Estonia must immediately be declared a neutral country, and to this end international guarantees must be sought from foreign Powers'. They had followed this up by sending representatives abroad to secure support and recognition from the Allies, and the Latvian and Lithuanian National Assemblies had pursued the same policy. At that time the Allied Powers were glad enough to do what little they could in the way of moral encouragement of any organization which was in conflict with Bolshevism.[2] *De jure* recognition of the Baltic States was delayed, however, owing to the persistent hope entertained by the Allied Powers in general, and by President Wilson in particular—a hope encouraged by Kolchak and the Russian reactionaries—that the Bolshevik régime might yet be destroyed. The Powers would have liked, therefore, to preserve a territorially indivisible Russia which could ultimately be handed back intact in the event of some form of constitutional monarchy being established. But the treaties concluded between the Baltic States and Soviet Russia in 1920, and the disappearance of the last hopes of a successful intervention, paved the way at last for the acceptance of the new order as a permanent one. Great Britain and France granted *de jure* recognition to Estonia and Latvia on January 26, 1921; and, on September 22 of the same year, the three Baltic States were admitted as Members of the League of Nations, although Lithuania did not, owing to the Vilna controversy, receive *de jure* recognition from Great Britain and France until December 20, 1922.[3]

Constitutions Adopted. Meanwhile, the new Governments had been pushing forward with the work of reconstruction and constitution-drafting, in so far as circumstances permitted. In Estonia a Constituent Assembly was elected in April 1919; the Paets Cabinet resigned, and was replaced by a new bourgeois coalition Government

[1] For an examination of the Memel question, see below, pp. 93–102.

[2] A limited and provisional *de facto* recognition was accorded to Estonia by France and Great Britain in March, and by Italy in May 1918; to Latvia by France in January, and by Great Britain in November 1918; and to Lithuania by Great Britain in September 1919.

[3] The U.S.A. delayed recognition of all three States until July 27, 1922.

1: Anonymous U-4 (no date)1938 RB1 Baltic States RB1

1. The Peace Treaties with Soviet Russia

Taken at their face value, the treaties of peace which Soviet Russia negotiated with Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania[1] in 1920 were models of restraint and even of generosity. The new Republics obtained *de jure* recognition in identic clauses declaring that 'on the basis of the right of all peoples freely to decide their own destinies, and even to separate themselves completely from the state of which they form a part', Soviet Russia unreservedly recognized their independence and autonomy, and voluntarily and for ever renounced all rights of sovereignty formerly held over their peoples and territories. The new frontiers were defined, and joint commissions set up to carry out their demarcation; in the case of Estonia, neutral zones were established on either side, to be maintained until January 1, 1922, and both parties undertook not to keep armed vessels on the frontier lakes of Peipus and Pskov. In the case of Lithuania, it was stipulated that the Lithuanian-Polish and Lithuanian-Latvian frontiers should be fixed by arrangement with those States.[2]

Provision was made in all three treaties for the exercise, on both sides of the frontier, of the right of option within a limited period of time in the matter of nationality, and also for the amnesty and repatriation of prisoners. In the Latvian and Estonian treaties special arrangements were made for the liquidation of the existing military situation by Joint Commissioners, and for the mutual surrender of all claims on account of war losses or expenses. In every case, Soviet Russia surrendered any claims to the transfer of property, or the compensatory value thereof, and renounced all rights held by the State over real and personal property. Moreover, the Soviet Government undertook to restore, in so far as was possible, the various objects of value—ranging from archives and title-deeds to rolling stock and church bells—which had been evacuated to Russia during the World War. In addition to this reparation in kind, Estonia was to receive 15 million gold roubles, Lithuania 3 million, and Latvia 4 million.

Diplomatic and consular relations were to be established and commercial treaties negotiated, in the case of Lithuania on a most-favoured-nation basis. The Latvian and Estonian treaties, however, contained stipulations that neither party could claim to enjoy privileges granted to a third State by virtue of a Customs or other union. One of the most important provisions related to the unification of transit rates and reciprocal exemption from transit taxes, with the

[1] For the texts of these Treaties: Tartu (February 2, 1920), Riga (August 11, 1920), and Moscow (July 12, 1920), see *League of Nations Treaty Series*, vols. xi, p. 30; iii, p. 106; and ii, p. 196.

[2] But see p. 90 for subsequent changes in the Soviet–Lithuanian frontier.

648 additional stipulation in Estonia's case that Soviet Russia should be given free docks and warehouse sites in Estonian ports.[1]

728 An interesting feature of the Estonian and Lithuanian treaties is the article providing that 'should the perpetual neutrality of Estonia (*or Lithuania*) be internationally recognized, Russia undertakes to respect such neutrality and to join in guaranteeing it'. Moreover, Estonia and Soviet Russia also agreed to accede to the conditions of any international agreement which might in future be reached for the neutralization of the Gulf of Finland.[2]

The Latvian treaty contained an undertaking on the part of each party not to permit the residence in its territory of representatives or officials of groups having as their object the overthrow of the Government of the other party. This might be taken to refer either to the prohibition of White Russian activities in Latvia,[3] or to Communist propaganda against the Latvian Government directed from Moscow.

2. Early Post-War Diplomacy

648 *Break-down of the First Schemes for a Greater Baltic Union, 1919–22.* As early as the Peace Conference in Paris in 1918–19, a project for a Baltic League had been drawn up and presented by the Estonian delegation, providing for a political and economic union of three separate groups of nations: the first consisting of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden; the second of Finland, Estonia, and Latvia; and the third of Lithuania and Poland. The object of this league was to safeguard the freedom of the Baltic Sea and to establish a common system of defence. In August 1919 an agreement was drafted for a union of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, and in the following September these three States, together with Finland, met to consider negotiating a common peace with Soviet Russia, who, however, refused to contemplate joint discussions. At the first Baltic Conference proper, held at Helsinki (Helsingfors) in January 1920, and attended by Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, the co-ordination of foreign policy and the organization of a general military defensive union were discussed, as well as the question of the neutralization of the Baltic Sea. At a second conference held in August 1920, at Bulduri (near Riga), it was decided to adopt a draft arbitration convention and to set up a permanent 'Council of Plenipotentiaries'. The Convention was never ratified, however, nor the

[1] See Appendix II.

[2] No such international agreement has so far been concluded; although in 1925–6 the Finnish and Estonian Governments negotiated agreements with the U.S.S.R. relating to the control over the Gulf and assuring free passage of Soviet vessels to Soviet ports, Estonia declined to neutralize the islands of Saaremaa (Oesel) and Hiiumaa (Dagö).

[3] Similar safeguards against this danger were incorporated in the Lithuanian and Estonian treaties.

23: Shabad N-4 (no date) 1951 R1 Soviet Union R1
Baltic Countries RB1

Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic

Capital, Riga; area, 24,600, population, 1,800,000

The Latvian SSR lies in the middle Baltic Region, on the Gulf of Riga, which here penetrates deeply into the mainland. This largest of the Baltic republics contains the fertile Riga-Yelgava lowland in its center and morainic hills in Kurland, in the west, and Livonia, in the northeast. The latter region, because of its picturesque hilly landscape, is often called the "Livonian Switzerland." The coasts are low and covered with pine-covered sand dunes. The Western Dvina River (Latvian *Daugava*) enters the republic from Belorussia in the southeast and empties into the Gulf of Riga. It is important for timber flotage and as a source of hydroelectric power; navigation is hampered by sand bars and rapids. Its chief tributary is the Lielupe River on the left. The western part of Latvia, generally known as Kurland, is drained by the Venta River, and the northern (Livonia) by the Gauya (Gauja) River. The forests, which cover 20 percent of the area, are found mainly in Kurland and in Livonia, where the maritime climate has its greatest influence.

The Latvians represent about 60 percent of the total population. The Latgals, who are predominantly Catholic and speak a dialect related to Lettish, constitute about 15 percent of the population and live mainly in Latgale, the southeastern section of the republic. Russians are the most important non-Latvian minority, followed by Jews, Belorussians, and Lithuanians along the eastern and southern frontiers. The predominantly Russian districts of Abrene or Jaunlatgale (now Pytalovo) and Kačanava (now Kachanovo), southwest of Pskov, were ceded to the newly formed Pskov Oblast of the Russian SFSR in 1945. With this cession, Latvia underwent its first teritorial change since the creation of the independent state in 1920.

Prior to the First World War the economy of Latvia was closely integrated with that of the Russian Empire. About one quarter of all Russian exports passed through the Latvian ports of Riga, Liepaya (Liepāja), and Ventspils. The ports, and mainly Riga, became the centers of important industries engaged in shipbuilding, machine construction, textile milling, and the manufacture of chemicals. During its independence Latvia developed its food and light industries to a large extent. At the present time Latvia's economy emphasizes its food industries, which are largely based on the raising of livestock. The dairy

23: Shabad N-4 (no date) 1951 Rl Soviet Union Rl
Balt. Countries RBl

1,500 feet. In the center lies the lake Vyrts-Yarv (Võrts Järv), which empties through the Emayogi (Emajõgi) into Lake Peipus on the eastern border of the republic. Lake Peipus is connected by the Narva River with the Gulf of Finland. The only other notable river is the Pyarnu (Pärnu), which flows southwest to the Gulf of Riga. The Estonian rivers are generally not navigable, but the numerous rapids provide a relatively large hydroelectric potential.

The Estonians represent more than 90 percent of the total population. The principal minorities are the Russians, mostly in the cities, and the Swedes, on the islands off the west coast and in the urban centers. As in Latvia, rural districts with a predominantly Russian population were separated from Latvia and annexed to the Russian SFSR. The territorial transfer which took place in 1945 involved the Petseri (now Pechory) district, which was incorporated by Pskov Oblast, and the narrow frontier strip on the right bank of the Narva River, which became part of Leningrad Oblast.

Estonia is considerably better supplied with mineral resources than are the other two Baltic republics. Most important are the oil-shale deposits between Lake Peipus and the Gulf of Finland, which form the basis of an industry characteristic of the local economy. The oil shale extends about sixty miles between Rakvere and Narva in reserves estimated at 1.5 to 2.5 billion tons. The yield is 20–30 percent. The product can be used as fuel in solid form, but produces a large proportion of ashes, reducing its caloric value. A method has been developed by which the ash residue can be converted into cement, thus rendering the use of the shale more economical. Distillation of the shale yields heavy oils and various other products used in the chemical industry. In recent years fuel gas has also been derived from the process. The center of the oil-shale district is Kokhtla-Yarve (Kohtla-Järve).

The textile industry assumes large proportions in the Estonian economy. There are large cotton mills at Narva and Tallin, and smaller weaving and flax-spinning enterprises in other towns. Forests, which cover 20 percent of the area, furnish lumber for match, paper, and furniture industries. Tyuri (Türi) is the chief paper-milling center. Blue clays along the Gulf of Finland coast supply a large cement mill at Kunda. The greater part of the metalworking industries is concentrated in Tallin, Tartu, and Pyarnu.

Dairy farming is the basic feature of the agricultural economy. Even more than in Latvia do meadows and pastures predominate over culti-